

### Aus research team predicts Brazuca behaviour

The Sports Aerodynamics Research Centre at RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia headed by professor Aleksandar Subic and associate professor Firoz Alam, has revealed interesting findings over the behaviour of the of the Brazuca ball, which is being used as the official matchball of the 2014 FIFA World Cup. Using the RMIT Industrial Wind Tunnel, the research team found that Brazuca will behave substantially different from the Jabulani used in 2010 or the Teamgeist used in 2006 and the Fevernova used in 2002.

According to the findings of the research, Brazuca has less aerodynamic resistance at wind speeds from 20 to 120 km/hr except 50 to 70 km/hr range compared to the Jabulani. The Brazuca will travel much faster than Jabulani and Teamgeist at low speeds. However, at speeds over 50 km/hr, the Brazuca will travel faster than Jabulani and slower than Fevernova and Teamgeist.

The study also revealed that the variation of drag coefficient (an indicator of aerodynamic efficiency, lower the coefficient, better the aerodynamic efficiency) between the two sides of Brazuca is around 2 to 3 per cent compared to Jabulani (9 per cent) and Teamgeist (5 per cent). The Brazuca's sideways behaviour looks more close to Fevernova. Hence, the Brazuca will have more predictable flight in calm wind conditions than its two predecessors Jabulani and Teamgeist. The research also predicts that taking the average altitude of the 12 host cities (1000m above sea level), players can over-shoot the ball during a long pass, free kick or long shot to the goal post unless the player understands the altitude effect.



Things may not be all smiles if England's Wayne Rooney (2nd from R) doesn't maintain team's discipline against Uruguay today. PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES

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## Uruguay v England Fight or flight for heavyweights

Heavyweights England and Uruguay must resurrect their World Cup hopes or face the prospect of an early flight home when they collide in a crunch Group D fixture on Thursday.

Opening defeats to Italy and Costa Rica respectively have left both countries in danger of elimination with little room for error in their last two pool games.

Defeat in Sao Paulo would surely spell doom for either Roy Hodgson's new-look England or two-time winners Uruguay, who were unimpressive in their 3-1 loss to Costa Rica.

Both countries have question marks over their strikers with calls in British media to either drop talisman Wayne Rooney, or move him from the left to his preferred central role.

For Uruguay, Liverpool's Luis Suarez, this season's Premier League top-scorer with 31 goals, is set to make his return from keyhole surgery on his the meniscus in his left knee last month.

Rooney set up England's goal but missed a chance to equalise during Saturday's 2-1 loss to Italy, in a subdued

### GPH ispat

display which had many critics questioning his place.

The Manchester United forward, 28, is still to score at a World Cup and when he was spotted training with the reserves on Monday, speculation rose that he had been axed.

But the English FA said Rooney had requested an extra training session while other first-team regulars continued

### Brazil getting better: Scolari

Gianluigi Buffon was back in World Cup training on Tuesday but Italy would not say whether or not he will be fit to face Costa Rica on Friday.

The 36-year-old Juventus shot-stopper seemed to be training normally, diving on the ball, but Azzurri coach Cesare Prandelli may yet decide to hold him back until the final Group D clash with Uruguay on June 24, to give the 2006 World Cup winner more time to fully recover.

Buffon had to pull out of Saturday's 2-1 win over England due to an ankle sprain, with Paris Saint-Germain's Salvatore Sirigu filling the void between the sticks.

Centre-back Andrea Barzagli and midfielder Daniele De Rossi, both of whom sat out Monday's training, were back in action on Tuesday.

Full-back Mattia De Sciglio, who was ruled out of the England match due to a muscle problem, also trained Tuesday.

"In my opinion - it's my own, not that of the critics - the team played better than they did against Croatia," he said. "There was at least an extra 10 percent than what there was against Croatia."

"The team has evolved. We can still improve, but we can still qualify for the next round. We showed quality, so I am satisfied."

Cameroon and Croatia meet in another Group A game in Manaus on Wednesday, but regardless of what happens in that encounter, Brazil know a win against Cameroon in Brasilia on June 23 will secure their place in the knockout phase.

"Brazilians are mad enough to believe that the others are not playing for anything. Mexico played more or less the same game as us. They had just about the same amount of possession, and the same number of shots on goal."

"The result wasn't what we wanted but the only thing missing for us was a goal."

The most encouraging aspect of the performance for Brazil came at the back, where captain Silva was more like his usual commanding self alongside David Luiz.

## Buffon back in training COLOMBIA V IVORY COAST Battle of perennial underachievers

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### KEY STATS

Colombia's 3-0 win over Greece was their biggest at a World Cup finals.

Colombia coach Jose Pekerman has yet to lose a match in normal time at the World Cup. Pekerman was in charge of Argentina in 2006 when they were beaten on penalties by Germany in the quarter-finals, having not previously lost a game.

Ivory Coast forward Didier Drogba and Colombia defender Mario Yepes are set for a battle of the veterans. Drogba is 36 and Yepes 38.

Colombia are taking part for the World Cup for the fifth time and have progressed to the last sixteen once. Ivory Coast are taking part for the third time and have never gone beyond the group stage.

Both teams have won their respective continental championships once. Colombia were South American champions in 2001 and Ivory Coast won the African Nations Cup in 1992.

## INFO ZONE

HEAD-TO-HEAD

**COLOMBIA** **IVORY COAST**

THEY HAVE NEVER FACED EACH OTHER

### KEY PLAYERS

TEO GUTIERREZ	SERGE AURIER
31	10
13	0
1	0
<b>CAPS</b>	<b>GOALS SCORED</b>
<b>WC GOALS</b>	<b>WC GOALS</b>

### TEAM FORMATION

4-4-2	4-2-3-1
Ospina	Barry
4: Zuinga, Yepes, Zapata, Armero	4: Aurier, Kolo Toure, Bamba, Boka
2: Cuadrado, Aguilar, Guarin, James	2: Zakora, Tiote
2: Bacca, Martinez	3: Gervinho, Yaya Toure, Kalou
	1: Drogba

### Grandpa joins #Persieing trend

Robin van Persie's magnificent leap to meet Daley Blind's pinpoint pass and send it looping over Iker Casillas and into the net in Netherlands' 5-1 win over Spain has become the iconic goal of the World Cup so far.

The emphatic swan dive has developed into an internet sensation, becoming the subject of thousands of vines, videos and internet memes in the last few days as #Persieing trends worldwide.

And now the striker's 93-year-old grandfather, Wim Ras, has joined in on the craze, with his own Van Persie impression.

"I thought it was a great landing," Ras told Omroep Brabant.

The 93-year-old spoke of his pride at seeing his grandson score such an impeccable goal and insists it was a very difficult thing to pull off.

"A belly landing, is not always fun, huh? I used to do gymnastics and I know what it is like, but in gymnastic those moves are planned and intended," he said.

"Robin only needed a fraction of a second to make the jump. To get such an exquisite delivery in such a situation and then to score, that is a hell of an achievement. The attack went well, but getting up there was very difficult. Obviously because it is not a movement that you do every day."

### KEY PLAYERS

LUIS SUAREZ	STEVEN GERRARD
77	112
38	21
3	3
<b>CAPS</b>	<b>GOALS SCORED</b>
<b>WC GOALS</b>	<b>WC GOALS</b>

### TEAM FORMATION

4-4-2	4-2-3-1
Muslera	Hart
4: Pereira, Gimenez, Godin, Caceres	4: Johnson, Cahill, Jagielka, Baines
4: Sturani, Lodeiro, Rios, Rodriguez	2: Henderson, Gerrard
2: Cavani, Suarez	3: Lallana, Rooney, Welbeck
	1: Sturridge

### KEY PLAYERS

KEISUKE HONDA	K MITROGLOU
57	33
23	8
3	0
<b>CAPS</b>	<b>GOALS SCORED</b>
<b>WC GOALS</b>	<b>WC GOALS</b>

### TEAM FORMATION

4-2-3-1	4-5-1
Kawashime	Karnezos
4: Uchida, Konno, Yoshida, Nagamoto	4: Torosidis, Manolas, Sokratis, Holecas
2: Endo, Hasebe	5: Salpingidis, Tziolis, Karagounis, Maniatis, Samaras
3: Honda, Kagawa, Kakitani	1: Mitroglou
1: Okazaki	



Keisuke Honda and Atsuto Uchida will have to stand up and deliver against Greece today if Japan are to remain in the race for the next round. PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES

## JAPAN V GREECE Moment of truth

Japan and Greece face a high-stakes World Cup shoot-out here on Thursday after opening match defeats which have left their participation in the tournament hanging by a thread.

With Japan outmuscled by Ivory Coast 2-1 and Greece thumped 3-0 by Colombia on Saturday, defeat for either side in their Group C collision in Natal could well be terminal.

Whether Japan or Greece are heading for the exit on Thursday night will depend on the outcome of Colombia's showdown with the Ivory Coast earlier in the day.

But what is not in doubt is that neither Japan nor Greece has much margin for error in Thursday's 7:00 pm (2200 GMT) kick-off at the Estadio das Dunas.

Japan's English-based defender Maya Yoshida believes it will be crucial for the Blue Samurai to score first against the Greeks.

"Of course we lost the first match so at the moment we're very disappointed but we still have two games to go," said Yoshida.

But Yoshida was adamant the Asian giants had not given up hope of progressing to the knockout rounds for only the third time in their history.

"Greece lost as well. They have good defenders and tactics," said Yoshida.

"They have a good orientation defensively so if we get the first goal they have to come forward so we will have a chance to take more initiative."

Keisuke Honda, who faded badly in the second half against the Ivorians after firing Japan ahead in the 16th minute, insisted his team-mates had picked themselves up after the defeat in Recife.

"We've got it out of our system," said Honda. "Losing wasn't what was shocking, it was not being able to play to our strengths."

"The best characteristics of the Japanese turned against us. We're a diligent side and when we started trying too hard it destroyed us."

But not everyone has been convinced. Former captain Hidetoshi Nakata, now a pundit commenting on the World Cup for public broadcaster NHK, questioned the tactics of manager Alberto Zaccheroni.

"What we think about what kind of game we want to produce because so far I've yet to figure out what kind of game Zaccheroni wants the team to play."

### Marcelo cries foul over penalty

Brazil full-back Marcelo has insisted the referee denied his team a penalty kick in the 0-0 draw with Mexico in Salvador.

The left-back burst forward into the box late in the second half and looked set to open up a clear chance for his side when he went down amidst a tangle with Raul Jimenez, but despite protests from the players and fans, the officials remained unmoved.

Marcelo is sure that contact was made, and told journalists after the contest: "When I controlled the ball, he grabbed my shoulder. And if he pulled me inside the box, it was a penalty."

"He pulled me. If he hadn't done that, I would've taken the ball. I would've made it to the ball and crossed it to one of my team mates."

Teammate Bernard believes that the most important aspect of the evening was the fact that Brazil did not lose the match.

"What we made very clear in the dressing room was that the most important thing was not the victory," he said. "It was to avoid a defeat."

"If we lost, we might not qualify as top in the group. We know the draw was a good result as well. Both teams had opportunities. Whoever scored first would cause complications for the opponent."

## BRAZILIAN BAURU

responsibility for the tournament to the Kremlin strongman, Ljstviyia daily reported, citing an unnamed government source.

PELE GLUED TO RADIO

Pele was glued to the radio as heavy traffic in Sao Paulo meant the Brazil legend missed the first half of his country's goalless draw Tuesday with Mexico.

"I suffered a lot... I listened to the first half in the car. There was so much traffic, the car just wasn't moving," said Pele, 73, who was driving from Santos to Sao Paulo, a megalopolis of 20 million.

"It was the second time I heard a Brazil World Cup match on the radio ... in 1950 and today," Pele told Globo television after the game in Fortaleza.

He insisted that "the team did not play badly - they just didn't win."

"We know there are no easy games. God willing we shall get to the final," he added, urging the populace to keep "thinking positively."

GERMAN WIN OUT OF THIS WORLD

Germany's opening World Cup victory was out of this world for astronaut Alexander Gerst, who kept an eye on his team's 4-0 win over Portugal while orbiting the earth.

"Between 10 hours (of) scientific experiments yesterday, 20 mins of World Cup football. Congratulations to the German team," the Baden-Wuerttemberg-born Gerst tweeted from the International Space Station (ISS).

The European Space Agency's geophysicist is on a 166-day deployment, but managed to catch some of Monday's match from Salvador on his laptop - 400 kilometres (248 miles) up.

Thomas Mueller scored a hat-trick, while Mats Hummels also headed a goal as Cristiano Ronaldo-led Portugal were routed, but despite his team's win, Gerst stayed diplomatic.

"Kudos and all the best to the World Cup

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It did not say which players were pictured on the stamps.

PUTIN TO ATTEND WORLD CUP

Russian President Vladimir Putin will jet to Brazil next month to take part in a handover ceremony at the end of the World Cup finals, with Russia gearing up to host the next championship, a newspaper report said Wednesday.

Putin will attend an event following the July 12 final in Rio de Janeiro where his Brazilian counterpart Dilma Rousseff will pass on



Will Ivory Coast striker Didier Drogba (L) be in the starting eleven today against Colombia following his inspirational performance against Japan as a second-half sub? PHOTO: AFP

## De Rossi wants it quiet

After being at the centre of controversy at the 2006 and 2010 World Cups, Daniele De Rossi now wants to be at the heart of Italy's push for a fifth world title.

The tough-tackling midfielder, known as DDR by the media, was red carded in 2006 for a crunching challenge on America's Brian McBride and fell theatrically to the floor to earn a dubious penalty against New Zealand four years later.

Playing in his third World Cup, the 30-year-old, who has spent his entire senior career at Roma, admits he fears what Brazil 2014 might have in store.

"Superstitious? A little bit," he said ahead of Friday's second Group D match against Costa Rica in Recife.

"Especially of a red card. After all these years, the only time I have been sent off for playing for Italy was in 2006. Now I want to make sure that we qualify for the second round."

Having defeated England 2-1 in their opener, Italy will face Costa Rica who stunned Copa America champions Uruguay in their first match.

With England and Uruguay playing 24 hours earlier in Sao Paulo, Italy's mission will be a lot clearer by Friday.

Not that World Cup success is going to change De Rossi who prefers to keep his business as low key as possible.

"Even at my club, I am not very enthusiastic about open training sessions. It's great for the children who come to see us but I do better without the noise of the 'tifosi' (fans), without you journalists," he said.

"I prefer silence for my work, for concentration."

Regarded at Roma as "Capitano Futuro", the heir to captain's armband worn so long by Francesco Totti, De Rossi is also not a fan of social media, keeping his distance from Twitter and Facebook.

"I am not against Twitter and Facebook, but I prefer to use private means. When I have something to say, I come to a press conference."

Another matter he is not keen on communicating is his opinion on Italy's minimum prospects in Brazil.

"To do that would make me look mediocre. In Germany in 2006, we were not the favourites and yet we went on to win the title."

If Italy make the quarterfinals -- and De Rossi steers clear of the cards -- he will make his 100th appearance.

But he has no thoughts of an impending international retirement.

"When I reach that time, you (the media) will be the first to know. I still feel able to play at the international level, I still feel young, still strong and still have plenty of confidence in my physical ability," he said.

"I love playing for the 'Nazionale' and as long as I am capable of doing it I will continue."

### Mandzukic eager to face Cameroon

Croatia star striker Mario Mandzukic is eager to face Cameroon on Wednesday after he had to miss the World Cup opener against Brazil through suspension, local media reported.

"It is every player's dream to play at a world tournament. I'm eager to play, eager to prove myself together with my team," he said.

"I hope that my first appearance at a World Cup will be marked with a positive outcome."

Mandzukic told reporters, quoted by state-run HINA news agency.

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